

Governor's Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments
Appropriations Hearing
HB 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Thursday, February 24th, 2022
Mary Ellen McGuire

Good afternoon, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Mary Ellen McGuire, and I am the Executive Director of Bridge House in Bridgeport. I have witnessed a remarkable transformation in the lives of people who proudly call themselves members of Bridge House. With the help of our staff and other members, individual members are able to access employment, education and social resources that can make all the difference in the world as to how they live their lives going forward. Members have access to social events here at Bridge House, which prevents isolation; they make friends here; and they are encouraged to go back to school. Bridge House encourages and helps members enter, or re-enter the workforce if they desire to do so. Bridge House also has a housing club, which supports people to obtain and retain their housing, which is critical. Our folks are challenged with a variety of issues that can sometimes make having a rent and having to be responsible for that rent difficult. Our weekly housing and job club meetings assist members with all of their challenges. So does our Member Bank, which helps folks make their payments on time to landlords, and utility companies

I think the most important responsibility I have as Executive Director is to make assure Bridge House has the funds and resources it needs to provide its programs to our members. Without state funded resources, Bridge House's doors would close. Our member's lives are dependent on your continued support to keep Bridge House open. That is not hyperbole. It is a fact.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.